

VZCZCXYZ0002

OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBUL #2797/01 2940227
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 200227Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5885

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 002797

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWAC](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHAN OFFICIALS AIR CONCERNS TO SIGAR ON USAGE OF
RECONSTRUCTION FUNDS

Classified By: Ambassador William Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Arnold Fields heard two common themes during meetings with the GIROA Auditor General and senior Afghan MOD and MOI officials: A) that there is insufficient coordination between Afghanistan and the Donor Community, including the U.S.; and B) that there is a perception among the general Afghan public that aid funds are not bringing expected improvements to their daily lives.

¶2. (U) On September 24, the SIGAR met with the Afghan Auditor General, with auditors and inspectors general from the Control and Audit Office at the MOD, and with Interior Minister Zarar. The SIGAR explained that Congress had established his office to ensure that U.S. and other reconstruction funds in Afghanistan are used to achieve the purposes for which they were appropriated. He asked each of his hosts whether they believed that funds directed to Afghanistan for reconstruction are employed appropriately under the current strategic approach.

¶3. (U) GIROA representatives in the MOD and the Auditor General,s office said more U.S. technical assistance in their function would be welcome and asked the SIGAR to help them curb contractor corruption, avoid civilian casualties, and expand capacity building efforts. Some had specific complaints. End Summary.

Auditor General Sharifi

¶4. (SBU) Auditor General, Minister Sharifi said that in the seven-years that the U.S. has been making significant financial contributions to Afghanistan, that there has been no relationship between the Afghan Auditor General,s and the U.S. GAO. He expressed certainty that his office could learn new techniques from the GAO to help bring transparency and international standards to the Afghan government. Sharifi ended the meeting by asking the SIGAR to find a way to create a relationship between his office and the GAO. (Note: The GAO reportedly has plans to meet with Afghan counterparts in the near future. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) According to Sharifi, last year the GIROA was unable to use approximately 45 percent of its development budget due to lack of capacity, both lack of qualified personnel and lack of administrative capacity to initiate reconstruction projects in certain areas. (Note: The money that was not used has been rolled over into this year,s budget. The Paris Conference, aware of the same issues that Sharifi cited, estimated that execution of the development budget would only be 55 percent. End Note)

¶6. (SBU) Sharifi also discussed the challenges of having ministers who have been outside of their own country for 35-years returning to take charge of a dynamic they no longer understand. He also expressed concerns about illiterate governors who hire unskilled personnel.

MOD Deputy Minister Akram Khan

¶17. (SBU) Deputy Minister of Defense, General Akram Khan welcomed the &good news⁸ recently conveyed by Secretary of Defense Gates that the Afghan National Army (ANA) will expand. He said expansion would help with Afghan efforts to defend the country during the winter, provide highway and election security, and with the new Afghan responsibility for Kabul security. Asked whether the billions of donor and Afghan funds were being directed at the right issues to achieve peace, security and development, Khan spoke positively of ANA development under Coalition tutelage. He pointed, however, to some lack of coordination between ANA and coalition forces on training, and singled out shortages in quality weaponry and ammunition, especially heavy weapons, as problems.

¶18. (SBU) He expressed concern about slow development of an Afghan air force. &Foreign pilots are not familiar with our customs. Afghan pilots would better distinguish harmless gatherings from clusters of fighters,⁸ he said. General Akram Khan acknowledged the difficulty of completely avoiding collateral damage when civilians are being used as human shields, but he urged better ANA-Coalition coordination.

¶19. (U) Addressing the broader question, Khan said that the GIROA would always prefer to be receive aid funds directly to spend on GIROA determined priorities. However, he acknowledged major advances--the Ring Road and wider education for children, including 1 million girls, for example--had been achieved.

MOD Inspector General Abdul Fazil

¶10. (SBU) Abdul Fazil, MOD Inspector General, outlined the extensive training his auditors received to bring them in line with U.S. standards, and expressed appreciation for U.S. assistance. Later, however, he spoke of &difficulties⁸ and listed his main problems as: (A) lack of discussion within the MOD on overall strategy and a resulting lack of general direction; and (B) slow adaptation away from a Russian-style system of accountability, which could be helped by greater Coalition guidance. &Our audit system is in chaos,⁸ he said.

ANA Inspector General MG Khan

¶11. (SBU) MG Khan, who has held his position of Inspector General of the Afghan Army for only two months, said that much donor money is not spent effectively. He cited concerns that contractors promise high quality products to win USG contracts in Afghanistan, but switch out the goods for low quality items when they deliver. Some construction projects, he said, could have been done for 60 percent of what was paid. MG Khan had an aide bring in a bag of products and pointed out the poor quality items in basic Army toiletry kits, shoes and uniforms. He also complained that that the MOD auditing policy is different from that dictated by the Council of Ministers, presenting the two documents as evidence.

Interior Minister Zarar

¶12. (U) MOI Minister Zarar, replaced since this conversation, convened his top police commanders for the meeting with the SIGAR. When asked whether he thought funds were properly used in Afghanistan reconstruction efforts, Zarar gave a long presentation of facts and figures touting progress on 23 MOI-led projects involving training and capacity building of the Afghan National Police (ANP). He cited a need for funds for additional projects to allow the ANP to develop capacity in mine detection, fire fighting, and air support to evacuate

the injured from remote areas.

¶13. (SBU) Zarar said 203 cases of corruption and bribery among the police force had been sent to the Attorney General for prosecution. Noting that real rule of law crosses the domains of police, the attorney general and judges, Zarar said that prosecutors and judges in Afghanistan are weak, and that the cycle of law enforcement is therefore not complete.

WOOD